United Nations CEDAW/C/SR.1227

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Distr.: General
28 July 2014

English only

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Fifty-eighth session

Summary record of the 1227th meeting
Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva, on Tuesday, 8 July 2014, at 10 a.m.

Chairperson: Ms. Jahan (*Vice-Chairperson*)

Contents

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention (*continued*)

Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Georgia

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent *within one week of the date of this document* to the Editing Section, room E.5108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.14-08075 (E) 240714 280714

1408075

Please recycle

In the absence of the Chairperson, Ms. Jahan (Vice-Chairperson) took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention *(continued)*

Combined fourth and fifth periodic reports of Georgia (CEDAW/C/GEO/4-5; CEDAW/C/GEO/Q/4-5 and Add.1)

1. *At the invitation of the Chairperson, the delegation of Georgia took places at the Committee table.*

2. **Ms. Kobakhidze** (Georgia), introducing the combined fourth and fifth periodic reports (CEDAW/C/GEO/4-5), said that the broad and high-level delegation underscored the importance Georgia attached to its reporting obligations under the Convention and its willingness to enhance women's rights. In that connection it had recently signed the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), which would enter into force on 1 August 2014. However, the most recent and important legislative development had been the adoption, in May 2014, of a comprehensive anti-discrimination law explicitly prohibiting all forms of discrimination on the grounds of gender; the Office of the Public Defender (Ombudsperson) would monitor its implementation. A national human rights strategy and action plan had also been approved in April 2014 requiring the Government to ensure gender mainstreaming in all policies and programmes. In addition, the Law on Gender Equality had entered into force leading to the establishment of the Gender Equality Council to coordinate gender issues. A national action plan for the implementation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions on women, peace and security for 2012–2015 had been adopted. Similarly, a national action plan on gender equality for 2014–2016 had been adopted, in line with the Council of Europe Gender Equality Strategy 2014–2017.

3. In 2012, the Government had begun a review of the Labour Code to bring labour laws into line with international conventions. As a result, from January 2014, maternity pay and leave had improved; furthermore, overtime for pregnant women or those who had recently given birth and the termination of a contract on the ground of pregnancy were now prohibited. Amendments would be introduced to the Civil Code to recognize the status of single mothers entitling them to additional benefits. Furthermore, a strategy and action plan developed by the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees envisaged special support for female-headed families and single mothers.

4. In the area of health, national laws and regulations and State and donor-supported health programmes guaranteed equal access to health care for men and women. Every woman was guaranteed a basic package of free antenatal and perinatal care, and women in certain age groups were entitled to breast and cervical cancer screening. Georgia had made significant progress in achieving the health-related Millennium Development Goals, including a 54 per cent reduction in maternal mortality rates, increased antenatal care visits, lower abortion rates and improvements to family planning services. However, it still needed to improve regionalization and standardization of perinatal care and reproductive health services. A comprehensive analysis of selective abortion was under way, in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund.

5. The Government faced serious challenges in the occupied regions of Georgia, where heavy restrictions on freedom of movement had been imposed. Up to half a million internally displaced persons and refugees, among them hundreds of thousands of women, continued to be deprived of their fundamental right to a safe and dignified return. Georgia was working with United Nations agencies and the donor community to meet the basic

needs of the people living in affected areas. It remained hopeful that the international community would respond to calls and react to the illegal activities in the occupied regions and the ongoing violations of human rights.

6. Domestic violence was being addressed through a law on the elimination of domestic violence and protection and assistance to victims, adopted in 2006, and a national action plan, adopted in 2013. The Government was focusing on capacity-building and training for law enforcement officials on issues related to domestic violence. Training was also planned for prosecutorial staff in 2014 on gender equality, violence against women and domestic violence.

7. Combating human trafficking remained a top priority and action taken included setting up mobile trafficking inspection groups, a special anti-trafficking unit and a task force. In addition, guidelines for law enforcement officials had been drawn up and an article on trafficking in the Criminal Code had been amended to make it clearer. As a result, the number of investigations, prosecutions and convictions had risen. The State Fund for the Protection and Assistance of the Victims of Trafficking continued to provide shelter, legal aid and medical assistance and ran rehabilitation and reintegration programmes for victims to meet the special needs of women and girls.

8. Steps to enhance women's political participation included offering financial incentives to political parties to place more women on candidate lists in the 2014 municipal elections. The 2012 general election had resulted in an 11 per cent female representation in parliament, with women holding key ministerial portfolios in justice, education and science, foreign affairs and environmental protection. Women also headed the National Security Council and the Central Election Commission. Visible progress had also been made in the economic empowerment of women.

9. Gender equality advisers had been appointed in municipalities to support the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality through training and other activities. Financial support to promote gender equality was wide-ranging and included preferential credit programmes for agricultural activities for both men and women and the inclusion of a gender component in investment projects. Public spending on health care and education and pensions had been increased and gender was taken into account when preparing the State budget.

10. Education was an area where there was less discrimination against women. Nevertheless, appropriate measures had been taken, inter alia, to ensure: emphasis on gender equality in the revised national curriculum; gender awareness-raising at all educational levels; training on gender equality for teachers, and specialized training for educational psychologists on how to identify victims of bullying, domestic violence and sexual violence; greater female participation in vocational education; better education opportunities for women in prisons; grants to encourage more women to undertake PhD studies and participate in scientific research; and awareness-raising in regions with high numbers of ethnic minorities of discrimination, domestic violence and human rights and fundamental freedoms, including gender rights.

11. In the military, a gender equality strategy had been adopted in 2014 to guarantee equal rights, freedoms and opportunities for men and women and to comply with the State party's international obligations. Less stringent physical test requirements had been introduced for women to encourage more of them to apply for the Armed Forces and steps had been taken to eradicate all forms of sexual violence. Training was provided to military personnel on gender equality and United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000).

12. As to the police, an action plan had been devised to increase the number and strengthen the role of women in the force, and special capacity-building and awareness-raising measures on gender equality and gender-based violence, in particular domestic

violence had been adopted. The topic of domestic violence was a mandatory part of the police academy curriculum and campaigns to raise public awareness of women's rights and existing legal mechanisms on domestic violence and other gender-based violence had been organized.

13. Women deprived of their liberty were protected against gender-based discrimination in the prison system. Both pretrial and convicted female prisoners were held separately from male prisoners and pregnant inmates and those with children up to 3 years of age were housed in a separate mother and child unit. Female prison cells were the same size as those of male prisoners and female inmates were entitled to more family visits and telephone calls than their male counterparts. A separate parole board considered the cases of female inmates. Prisoner health-care services had been brought into line with national standards and were equally accessible to female and male prisoners. The specific health-care needs of female prisoners were provided for. A strategy and action plan for female prisoners, drafted in line with the United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules), was being finalized and training on the implementation of those rules was being organized.

14. The Ministry of Culture promoted gender equality through various projects such as funding the translation and publication of books by Georgian female writers and promoting national minority cultures and traditions through activities in museums, theatres and cultural centres. The Ministry of Youth and Sports was taking steps to eliminate discrimination against women and ensure gender equality in education, public and political life and sport, in accordance with articles 7 and 10 of the Convention. Legislation required television and radio broadcasters to reflect the ethnic, cultural, language, religious, age and gender diversities in Georgian society in their programmes; women's rights were given ample coverage in programmes by public broadcasters.

Articles 1 to 3

15. **Ms. Neubauer** asked whether the new anti-discrimination law provided for enforcement measures and sanctions and appropriate remedies; whether the Law on Gender Equality would be reviewed to ensure its enforceability; and how the two laws would coexist in practice. Were the provisions of the two laws consistent, particularly in terms of defining multiple discrimination? She wished to know whether the new anti-discrimination law envisaged shifting the burden of proof in cases of alleged discrimination, including on grounds of sex and gender. She asked whether the provisions on non-discrimination and equality under the Law on Gender Equality and other domestic legislation had ever been applied. Had the Convention ever been invoked in court cases; and, if so, had victims been adequately compensated for violations of their rights under the instrument. Lastly, was a system in place to monitor progress regarding women's equal access to justice and remedies?

16. She enquired about the existence of disaggregated data on complaints lodged with judicial and quasi-judicial and administrative bodies such as labour inspectorates, and of information on the number of women employed in law enforcement bodies and judicial and quasi-judicial institutions. She also enquired about the human and financial resources available to the Office of the Public Defender to oversee implementation of the anti-discrimination law and to investigate complaints. If the Office did not have sufficient resources, she wondered how it could carry out its tasks and fulfil its purpose as a fully-fledged national equality body.

17. **Ms. Schulz** sought confirmation that the new anti-discrimination law was already in force and emphasized that it should protect internally displaced women, women in detention, especially on drugs-related offences, and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) women.

18. She asked whether gender mainstreaming was included in efforts to address the long-term housing, economic empowerment, poverty alleviation, health and education needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs), and what steps had been taken to prevent discrimination against internally displaced women, especially single and older women, women with disabilities and female heads of households. Was there a strategy to ensure that women were part of people-to-people diplomacy and national and international efforts to resolve the post-conflict situation? What support was being received in the light of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) subsequent resolutions and the Committee's general recommendation No. 30? She wondered whether consideration had been given to the specific needs of internally displaced women according to where they lived and the length of time they had been displaced. How were security issues being tackled in conflict-affected villages, where women were exposed to a heightened risk of sexual exploitation and violence?

19. Concerning LGBTI persons, she asked whether sexual orientation was covered in both the anti-discrimination law and the Criminal Code; what measures were planned or had been adopted to guarantee that LGBTI persons enjoyed their rights to association and peaceful demonstration and to protect LGBTI human rights defenders and NGO personnel against police violence and mistreatment. She enquired about measures to combat homophobic statements and smear campaigns against the LGBTI population, and whether there were plans to ease the requirement for transgender persons to undergo irreversible treatments before being entitled to apply for new identity papers.

20. Regarding women in detention, she asked: what steps had been taken to ensure that female prisoners benefited from their right to more family visits and telephone calls than male prisoners; when female prisoners would be accorded the right to the conjugal visits already enjoyed by male prisoners; whether the past history of female prisoners was taken into account, particularly violence and drug and/or alcohol dependency, with a view to offering relevant treatment to facilitate their reintegration after release. Were there any plans to amend legislation on drug-related offences, in particular with the aim of introducing different penalties for private consumption and drug trafficking and alternative sanctions, such as community service, for minor offences?

21. **Ms. Leinarte** wondered whether sufficient human and financial resources had been allocated to the Gender Equality Council to coordinate implementation of its action plan to promote gender equality and undertake its other responsibilities. Did the fact that it was a legislative body pose a serious problem for implementing the plan?

22. She requested further details of the national human rights strategy and action plan, including how they would strengthen institutional mechanisms and implement gender mainstreaming policies. She asked whether sufficient financial resources would be allocated to the new human rights council envisaged under the strategy to enable it to implement gender policies, in line with the recommendations of the Beijing Platform for Action. She also requested more information on the strategy to develop national institutions for the advancement of women at the local level.

23. **Mr. Lordkipanidze** (Georgia) confirmed that the laws on both gender equality and non-discrimination contained definitions of discrimination and had overlapping areas of application: the anti-discrimination law focused on institutional issues and served to strengthen the gender equality law. He read aloud articles 2 to 4 of the anti-discrimination law, which defined its scope and the measures available under it, and article 6, which listed the functions of the Office of the Public Defender. The Office monitored implementation of the law and also published an annual report on progress in the area of gender equality. The burden of proof in cases brought before the Office was on the applicant rather than the respondent. In theory, any person considering themselves a victim of discrimination could apply for damages in court, but no claims had yet been received.

24. **Ms. Kobakhidze** (Georgia) said that additional funding for the Office of the Public Defender was being considered for 2015, and two new departments were to be added that would specialize in anti-discrimination law. Perhaps the law had not been invoked yet because it had come into force only recently.

25. **Ms. Jashi** (Georgia) said that Georgia had no stand-alone institution for gender equality but that the Gender Equality Council brought together representatives of the executive power and other ministries; as for the action plan on gender equality, the Council had cooperated closely with international NGOs and the legislative and judicial branches.

26. Georgia's regulations on mandatory sterilization for transgender surgeries were no less liberal than those of other Commonwealth of Independent States countries, and sterilization only took place with a patient's informed consent. Georgia had invested considerably in medical services for prisoners and was standardizing health care for the general public and the prison population. A working group was preparing amendments to the existing drug policy, including separate penalties for private consumption and trafficking and requirements for emergency medical services to involve law enforcement officials in cases of overdose. In terms of treatment, over 2,500 intravenous drug users currently benefited from methadone replacement therapies funded by the State, for which pregnant women prioritized.

27. **Mr. Lordkipanidze** (Georgia) said that the Government was revisiting its definition of single mothers in the Civil Code. In the Labour Code, maternity leave had recently been increased from four to six months and overtime work had been prohibited for mothers who had recently given birth.

28. **Ms. Verulashvili** (Georgia) said that female prisoners had monthly entitlements to three short visits, five 15-minute phone calls, three hour-long visits and three Skype video calls – free of charge for those from socially vulnerable families. The Government was required to create capacity for overnight visits by 2015. When employment was available, socially vulnerable prisoners were given priority. Special attention was paid to mothers of children in foster care and children up to 3 years of age were permitted to stay with their mothers in specialized units equipped with health-care and dietary facilities. Free legal aid was available to all prisoners; moreover, each prison had a legal counselling unit and NGOs sometimes provided legal services. For the treatment of substance abuse, methadone was available outside institutions, and physicians, specialists in substance abuse and psychologists were on hand in most prisons.

29. **Ms. Gueshashvili** (Georgia) said that a law on IDPs had entered into force in March 2014 and was designed to bring national legislation into line with international standards by setting out a definition of IDPs, ensuring greater protection against arbitrary evictions and increasing their allowances. A variety of measures helped mainstream the gender issue in relation to IDPs: questionnaires on IDP living conditions had been sent to families concerned and the responses would be analysed as part of a technical assistance project with the European Union; a housing allocation points system had been introduced, giving female-headed households and vulnerable women priority access to housing; an IDP livelihood action plan had established women as priority targets allowing them to benefit from a number of socioeconomic programmes; IDPs had been acknowledged as a vulnerable category in various interministerial education and health programmes; and the criteria for gaining IDP status had been extended, including to persons who could not use agricultural lands due to the security risk.

30. **Mr. Tsiskarishvili** (Georgia) said that the Government had difficulties implementing the Convention in the occupied territories of Abkhazia and Tskhinvali Region/South Ossetia, as it was unable to exercise effective control. The situation on the ground had deteriorated since the previous dialogue with the Committee in 2006. In

addition, owing to the decision of the Russian Federation not to maintain human rights monitoring mechanisms in the area and the inability of the European Union monitoring mission to access the region, Georgia could not guarantee effective investigations into human rights violations.

31. **Ms. Kvirikashvili** (Georgia) said that the right of assembly was enshrined in the Constitution and applied to all persons, including LGBTI persons. The Ministry of Internal Affairs had conducted an investigation into the alleged violation of LGBTI rights at a rally on 17 May 2013 and brought charges against five persons under article 161 of the Criminal Code. In 2012, the Criminal Code had been amended establishing discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation or gender identity as an aggravating factor in criminal offences. Guidelines for various bodies were being updated to reflect the amendment, including for the Office of the Prosecutor General.

32. **Mr. Tangiashvili** (Georgia) said that his Government fully supported projects by international organizations to promote the role of women in the occupied territories and encourage cooperation on the two sides of the disputed territories. In addition, Georgian representatives actively participated in international discussions held in Geneva on issues such as United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) and the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism.

33. **Ms. Magradze** (Georgia) said that training was currently being dispensed on drawing up a gender budget.

34. **Mr. Lordkipanidze** (Georgia) said that statistics on domestic violence and sexual offences were available to the public on request from the Office of the Prosecutor General.

35. **Ms. Halperin-Kaddari** asked for the recent anti-discrimination law to be translated into English.

36. **Ms. Neubauer** said that as the new anti-discrimination law had not been invoked in court, women might not be aware of their rights. She asked how the Government, rather than NGOs, made the Committee's recommendations and concluding observations known to the public.

37. **Mr. Bruun** asked whether it was true that the new anti-discrimination law was applicable only to issues not covered by other legislation and thus could not prevail over existing discriminatory laws; whether the Convention was directly applicable in the Georgian legal system and could take precedence over existing discriminatory legislation; and why the Government had abandoned the idea of having an inspector for equality protection.

38. **Ms. Šimonović** asked, as an extension to Ms. Neubauer's question, whether the delegation believed that the public was sufficiently aware of and knowledgeable about the Convention and its Optional Protocol. She also sought confirmation that Georgia had a monistic system, as implied by article 6, paragraph 2, of its Constitution, and asked whether information on the Convention and the Committee's jurisprudence was provided to lawyers and prosecutors.

39. **Ms. Leinarte** asked what role the human rights council would play, given that the Gender Equality Council was the main body for coordinating and implementing gender mainstreaming; and how much human and financial resources would be allocated to the Gender Equality Council.

40. **Ms. Schulz**, clarifying her earlier questions, said that she wished to ascertain: whether free legal aid was available to detainees not only for criminal cases but also for civil ones; and whether the State party planned to ease the requirement that transgender

persons should undergo irreversible treatment in order to obtain new identity papers, and not whether irreversible treatments for transgender persons were mandatory.

41. **Ms. Kobakhidze** (Georgia) explained that the Gender Equality Council was a permanent body, comprising 12 members of parliament, half of whom were women. It did not have its own budget. A special advisor would soon be appointed to advise parliament on gender equality policies; the advisor would work with an interagency council, which would be responsible for implementing the actions plans on domestic violence and human trafficking.

42. **Ms. Kobakhidze** (Georgia) added that, although no cases relating to discrimination had been brought under the new anti-discrimination law, there had been many cases relating to domestic violence and human trafficking of which her delegation could provide the Committee with relevant details. Amendments to several laws had recently been adopted on free legal aid to prisoners in cases of administrative offences, domestic violence and some civil cases. The English translation of the anti-discrimination law was already available and could already be provided to the Committee.

43. **Ms. Gabitashvili** (Georgia) said that human rights, including gender rights and non-discrimination, formed part of the syllabus for civic education, which was a compulsory subject for grades 9 and 10 under the national curriculum of Georgia for 2011 to 2016. In partnership with the NGO sector, the Ministry of Education had been monitoring delivery of the civic education syllabus very closely and was reviewing the number of hours allocated to the subject, the grades at which it was taught, and the guidance on syllabus delivery provided for teachers as part of a comprehensive review of the national curriculum to align it with the national action plan on gender equality.

44. The National Centre for Teachers' Professional Development ran training courses to support implementation of the Convention's provisions, including programmes for civic education teachers. Professional guidelines had been developed for teachers which encompassed minority issues, equality, stereotypes, discrimination and other human rights subjects. The Women's Information Centre, a local NGO, also offered gender-related training programmes.

45. Various initiatives had been launched in different parts of Georgia under the Ministry of Education and Science's vocational training strategy for 2012–2013. Inclusive education had been introduced in 2006 and had been compulsory in State schools since 2012, including in vocational training schools, and recent figures indicated that there were currently 42 women with special educational needs enrolled on vocational programmes.

46. **Mr. Tchitchinadze** (Georgia) said that that topical gender-related issues such as women's rights, women in politics, early marriage, selective abortion, domestic violence, child abuse and homophobia were regularly addressed on talk shows and other television and radio programmes and that the Public Broadcaster made free airtime available for social advertising. One of the Broadcaster's main aims was to encourage people to talk openly about subjects that had previously been addressed in home environments only and, in so doing, to fight stereotypes, challenge traditional attitudes and spotlight women's role in a modern society. A programme entitled "Gender and Society", produced with support from the Women's Information Centre and the Embassy of the United States of America, had been aired in 2013.

47. **Mr. Tsuladze** (Georgia) said that one of the goals of the gender equality action plan was to develop a gender disaggregated statistical information system. That goal should be met in 2015. The plan also stipulated that judges and other court officials should receive specific training in how to address gender issues and domestic violence. That training was being provided through the High School Of Justice, with support from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), USAID and the United Nations Entity for Gender

Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The course content had been determined by experts from UNDP and UN-Women, with assistance from the two Georgian judges selected to deliver the training. Fifteen judges had already completed the course and feedback had been very positive.

48. **Ms. Zhvania** (Georgia) said that the Central Election Commission of Georgia had a comprehensive gender-related programme and was already training its members in women's leadership, gender equality and the content of the Convention. The Commission also provided grants, allocated from the central State budget, to local NGOs engaged in public awareness-raising activities.

49. **Ms. Magradze** (Georgia) said that the Government was aware that the regulation of gender reassignment surgery could be improved. However, because the issue of sterilization was a sensitive one which raised human rights and non-discrimination questions as well as medical considerations, the Government needed time to analyse public awareness, opinion and reaction before taking any decisions about amendments.

Articles 4 to 6

50. **Ms. Neubauer** said that, although its gender equality and non-discrimination legislation provided a basis for the application of temporary special measures, the State party appeared to have considered that possibility only as means to increase women's representation on electoral lists. She urged the State party to provide the accurate information on its position regarding the need for temporary special measures requested in paragraph 6 of the list of issues (CEDAW/C/GEO/Q/4-5). She would particularly like to know about any efforts to enhance understanding of the meaning and scope of temporary special measures among members of parliament and other relevant actors and whether the use of such measures might be envisaged as an appropriate and effective means to address the situation of women facing multiple forms of discrimination, including migrant women, victims of violence and women in prostitution.

51. **Ms. Al-Jehani** sought information about government measures to eliminate gender stereotyping and the media sexualization of women and to address their impact on the realization of women's rights and the development of a gender-sensitive information policy. She also asked about efforts to assess the impact of the law on broadcasting and the review of the education curricula, and any government support and funding provided for local NGOs working to raise awareness of harmful practices and gender stereotyping.

52. She requested information on the legislative review to harmonize national laws with international treaties; progress towards ratification of the Istanbul Convention; the human and financial resources allocated to implementation of the 2013–2015 national action plan for the elimination of domestic violence and the mechanism responsible for its oversight; and action taken to prevent and investigate the growing number of femicides in Georgia.

53. With regard to the law on the elimination of domestic violence, she would like to know: whether marital rape was expressly criminalized in its provisions; what mechanism or body ensured the interagency coordination necessary to implement the law; whether the decline in cases of domestic violence registered since criminalization reflected a lack of confidence in the law enforcement authorities; and whether reports of police officers refusing to issue restraining orders in cases of family conflict were authentic. Information about rehabilitation measures for the perpetrators of domestic violence, the role of social workers in prevention and response and the availability and distribution of shelters for victims would be also appreciated. Reports that domestic violence was widely tolerated in Georgia and that the Ministry of Internal Affairs did not acknowledge the gender dimension of such acts in investigative and case management activities were a cause of great concern.

54. Lastly, she asked: whether sexual harassment in the workplace and public spheres was expressly criminalized by law and, if so, what sanctions were imposed; what was being done to stop the virginity testing services provided by the State's forensic analysis bureau and raise awareness about the negative impact on women's psychological and mental health; and whether corporal punishment was prohibited. She invited the delegation to provide statistics about the prevalence of child abuse.

55. **The Chairperson**, speaking in her capacity as an expert, said that the State party had made commendable efforts to combat human trafficking, but that the gaps in legislation and its application remained a source of concern. She invited the delegation to explain the reasons behind the decline in the number of suspected trafficking offences investigated and prosecuted in recent years, highlighting the need to step up law enforcement efforts through increased resource allocation and coordinated civil society engagement. She asked what was being done to improve the relatively low rate of victim identification, especially for foreign women engaged in commercial sex activities, and ensure more effective protection, investigation and prosecution, and in how many recent prosecutions and convictions the victims had been women. She perceived a need for more proactive NGO partnerships to improve the provision of assistance and reintegration services; for more effective victim and witness protection measures to ensure that victims were not charged with associated offences; and for more effective labour inspection and monitoring services to identify cases of forced labour and forced prostitution perpetrated by apparently legal employment agencies. Though illegal, prostitution was widespread in Georgia and the relevant laws did not appear to be used effectively. Reports indicated that victims of sex trafficking were reclassified as victims of forced prostitution, allowing the perpetrators to escape with far more lenient sentences. Improvements were therefore clearly needed. Lastly, she asked for information about the rehabilitation and reintegration support available for women who wished to abandon prostitution.

56. **Ms. Magradze** (Georgia) said that the use of quotas faced opposition from both supporters of the prevailing patriarchy and sponsors of women's empowerment. Even without quotas, women had gained 11 per cent of seats in parliament. The introduction of financial incentives for political parties who met the 30 per cent target for women's inclusion on electoral lists might increase the number of women in parliament but would have no impact on some parties. She hoped that if the incentives did not have the desired effect opponents could be persuaded to support obligatory quotas.

57. **Ms. Peradze** (Georgia) said that, in response to the rising number of femicides, the Ministry of Internal Affairs had established a working group to formulate a short-term strategy to address the problem through awareness-raising, regular meetings with NGOs and the Office of the Public Defender, special training for officers and in-depth analysis of individual murder cases. The public relations section was organizing a public awareness-raising campaign in which representatives of the Ministry would appear on television talk shows and radio programmes to discuss domestic violence and around 2,000 police officers had received training in 2013. The legislation on restraining orders had been amended to give more officers issuing authority and relax other issuance constraints. Analysis of the individual cases of femicide had revealed that the police had been called in only one of the incidents.

58. **Ms. Kvirikashvili** (Georgia) said that the amendment to the Criminal Code enacted in 2012 had entailed the addition of two new articles: the first provided a definition of domestic violence; the second extended the concept to include psychological as well as physical violence. In January 2013, the Office of the Prosecutor General had issued a recommendation on how to interpret the new articles with a view to ensuring consistent practice and effective implementation. The recommendation expressly indicated that in cases involving domestic offences prosecutors should consider the victim's position and

rule in the best interests of the family and children. All prosecutors had participated in a first wave of training conducted in 2012 and, with support from UN-Women, a second wave would run in the near future. The Office of the Prosecutor General would be able to provide the Committee with gender disaggregated data on domestic violence, including the number of minors involved and the number of convictions.

59. **Ms. Kobakhidze** (Georgia) said that the Government had signed the Istanbul Convention and would ratify it in autumn 2014. It had already begun making the necessary legislative amendments.

60. **Ms. Magradze** (Georgia) said that almost all the amendments needed to align national legislation with the Istanbul Convention, including provisions to guarantee the availability of free legal aid, emergency medical and psychological services, and of financial compensation, had already been submitted to parliament. Incorporating the principle which dictated that offenders should be removed from the victim's home on the basis of a restraining order had proved problematic in cases where the home was the property of the perpetrator, but a solution had eventually been found. A number of other legislative texts were due to be amended, including the Civil Code, to which a prohibition on the use of violence to discipline children would be added, as well as the law dealing with forced and early marriages.

61. **Ms. Meskhi** (Georgia) said that the Government provided medical, psychological and legal assistance for victims of domestic violence as well as accommodation, rehabilitation and reintegration services. There were three State-run shelters and a fourth, located in a rural area, would open in the near future. Similar services were available for victims of human trafficking, who might also receive financial compensation. Victim status was determined on the basis of an identification questionnaire, and those who met the conditions were entitled to all services without charge.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.